UNMC Pathologist Receives $890,000 for Lymphoma Research

Timothy Greiner, M.D., Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology and Microbiology, received funding from the Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF) for a three year grant which will use DNA technology to study how some genes are turned off in mantle cell lymphoma. The project will be led by Dr. Greiner, in collaboration with Judith Christman, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The, $890,000 grant is part of a $12.8 million funding initiative from the LRF to help hunt for clues to cure and better treat a rare form of blood cancer, mantle cell lymphoma. UNMC is one of only nine institutions recently named as part of this initiative.

Laboratory Celebrates National Laboratory Week

The Pathology and Microbiology Laboratories were host to a variety of events the week of April 18-24th, a time set aside to recognize and appreciate medical laboratory personnel and board certified pathologists, and the roles they play in all aspects of health care.

National Medical Laboratory Week (NMLW) has grown increasingly important over the years as medical laboratory personnel celebrate their professionalism and are recognized for their efforts on behalf of their patients. The week is often a time for laboratories to inform and educate medical colleagues and the public about the medical laboratory. Since medical laboratory professionals often work “behind the scenes,” few people know much about the critically important testing that laboratories perform every day. NMLW is an opportunity to inform others about medical laboratory professions, to recruit students to the field, to thank technologists and technicians, to build morale, and to gain visibility for the laboratory throughout the institution and the community.

The Nebraska Medical Center uses the week as an opportunity to thank the hundreds of employees who work throughout the various laboratories. Events within the Pathology and Microbiology laboratories this year included a week of events, ending with a pizza party and over 200 free prizes awarded.
Letter from the Chair

As I look out my office window, they are pouring concrete for one of the floors of the new addition to our hospital.

This past year has been a tremendous year for our medical center, including the Department of Pathology and Microbiology. Not only has there been major construction of new buildings, including the Durham Research Center, we have also added new faculty and new programs. Programs already started have continued to grow and flourish.

In the past year, we have added several new faculty, including Neil Abrahams, Anser Azim, Kerry Bernal, Cathy Gebhart, Chris Hans and James Haorah. In addition, Dr. Bernal was promoted to Assistant Professor, Drs. Tsuneya Ikezu, Huangui Xiong, and Doug Stickle were promoted to Associate Professor, and Stan Radio to Professor. Dr. Paul Dunman will be joining our faculty on July 1. In addition, several new students and post-doctoral fellows have joined our department. We have also recruited three new outstanding residents, Allison Cushman-Vokoun, Heather Peck and Craig Nerby; and a new hematopathology fellow, Vishala Neppalli. Dr. Kai Fu will be completing his hematopathology fellowship and joining our faculty on July 1.

It is an exciting time in medicine and in research, and certainly an exciting time at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. In concert with the continued growth of several programs in our department and on campus, it is timely for major planning efforts to take place to provide guidance for our future. These are underway, and results will be reported in future editions of our departmental newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outstanding faculty, staff and students that have helped us achieve the successes we have so far, and more importantly, the basis they will provide for our continued growth. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Harold Maurer, Chancellor of UNMC, Dr. John Gollan, Dean of the College of Medicine, and Mr. Glen Fosdick, CEO of The Nebraska Medical Center, for their strong support and guidance.

UNMC Pathologist Receives Gilmore Award

Yuri Persidsky, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology and Microbiology has been named this year’s recipient of the UNMC College of Medicine Joseph P. Gilmore Outstanding Investigator award.

Dr. Persidsky is involved in both clinical service in anatomic pathology and basic research in the Center for Neurovirology and Neurodegenerative Disorders (CNND). He is the deputy director of the CNND and the chief of the Laboratory of Neuropathology/Neurovirology within the CNND.

Dr. Joseph P. Gilmore, for whom the award is named, was Professor and Chair of the Department of Physiology from 1970 to 1987. The award was established by the Department of Physiology and Biophysics upon Dr. Gilmore’s retirement in 1987 to recognize outstanding research contributions by a faculty member.

Dr. Persidsky, who has been with UNMC since 1994, started his career here with an idea to develop a small animal model to study how HIV works in the brain. With the help of Dr. Howard Gendelman, Director of the CNND, a severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) mouse model for HIV-1 infection of the brain was gradually developed.

Since its inception, the model has become recognized in the scientific community on several fronts, including its uniqueness in testing new medications’ effectiveness for treating HIV-1 cognitive impairment.

According to Dr. Persidsky, the “mouse model is unique. It allows us to do research that others cannot do. We use small animals repopulated with human cells infected with human virus for the drug efficacy testing in a setting that closely resembles human disease.”

Think like a man of action, act like a man of thought.

- Henri Bergson
**NEW HIRES**

Please welcome the following new personnel to the Department of Pathology & Microbiology:

Joe Choquette – Clinical Lab Analyst – 4/5/2004  
Dana El-Hajjar – Research Technologist II – 2/2/2004  
Catherine Gebhart – Instructor – 2/1/2004  
Melissa Hanlon – Medical Technologist – 4/26/2004  
Stacy Morrow – Medical Technologist – 3/22/2004  
Rebecca Slager – Postdoctoral Fellow – 3/10/2004  
Ming Zhou – Cytogenetic Tech I – 3/15/2004  
Muhammed Zulfiqar – Graduate Assistant – 1/23/2004

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**Students Receive Schenken Award**

Three UNMC medical students will receive the 2004 Schenken Award during the Honors Convocation on May 13, 2004. Christopher Hunzeker was the primary recipient of this year’s award. Two of the recipients, Erin Christine Ewing Rose and Brenda Marie Chrastil will receive Honorable Mentions.

The Schenken Award is presented to outstanding medical students each year in honor of Dr. Jerald R. Schenken, a nationally recognized pathologist. The award is presented to those medical students who best exemplify professionalism and scholarship in the field of pathology.

Dr. Schenken was part of the medical center from 1965 until his death in 2001. The award was created to recognize Dr. Schenken for his contributions to the education of future physicians and medical technologists and to the continuing education of health professionals.

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**Silver U Recipient**

Congratulation to Amber Donnelly, School of Allied Health Professions, for receiving the April, 2004 Silver “U” Award.

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**Symposium on Cancer Metastasis Held**

On Tuesday, April 13th, the Molecular Therapeutics Seminar Series Program, sponsored by the Department of Pathology and Microbiology and the Eppley Cancer Center, hosted an all day symposium entitled “Cancer Metastasis: Biology, Models and Therapeutic Strategies.”

Speakers for the event included Isaiah J. Fidler, D.V.M., Ph.D., of MD Anderson; Avraham Raz, Ph.D., of Karmanos Cancer Institute, as well as Rakesh Singh, Ph.D, and James Talmadge, Ph.D., both of UNMC, Pathology and Microbiology.

Dr. Fidler presented on “Seed and Soil Principles that Dictate the Proper Use of Animal Models to Study the Biology of Cancer” and “Anti-Vascular Therapy of Bone Metastasis.”

Dr. Raz spoke on the topic, “On the Role of Galectin-3 in Metastasis: From the Bench to the Clinic and Back.”

Dr. Singh presented the topic of “Host Tumor Interactions in Tumor Angiogenesis.”

Dr. Talmadge spoke on “Immunotherapy of Metastasis: Regulation by Host and Therapeutic Intervention.”

The event was chaired by Dr. Samuel M. Cohen, Chair of the Department of Pathology and Microbiology, and Ken Cowan, M.D., Ph.D., of Eppley Cancer Center.

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**Dr. Sato Receives Alzheimer’s Research Award**

Shinji Sato, Ph.D., a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Pathology and Microbiology, is this year’s recipient of the Vada Kinman Oldfield Alzheimer’s Research Fund Award. The award is presented annually to an individual with a promising new idea in Alzheimer’s research. The award, presented to Dr. Sato on April 19th, provides research.

The award, presented to Dr. Sato on April 19th, provides a $10,000 stipend.

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Haven Receives Chancellor’s Gold U Award

Mary Haven, Associate Dean, School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP), is the April recipient of the Chancellor’s Gold ‘U’ Award.

Mary has been with UNMC for over 34 years. She began her career with UNMC when she joined the Department of Pathology and Microbiology as a chemist.

She has held her most current position, as Associate Dean for SAHP, for the past nine years. During that time, she has been instrumental in guiding the program to a leadership position in distance learning. According to Mary, “it’s important to become known for distance education,” particularly as state funding for education decreases. “Our goal is to prepare our programs to be the exporters of didactic allied health education.” Mary credits the faculty, staff and students for doing the things necessary to move the program in the right direction.

Faculty Honored for Years of Service

Many UNMC faculty members were honored for their years of service to the university on April 20th. Faculty from the department include:

- Rodney McComb, M.D. and Dennis Weisenburger, M.D. for 20 years of service.
- Timothy Greiner, M.D., for 10 years of service.
- Patricia Aoun, M.D., John Baker, M.D., James Gulizia, M.D., Ph.D., Thomas Jerrells, Ph.D., and R. Lee Mosley, Ph.D., for 5 years of service.

Donating to Neuroscience Research

The Center for Neurovirology and Neurodegenerative Disorders (CNND) conducts research on HIV-1 associated dementia, Alzheimer’s, and Parkinson’s disease. The research depends on a variety of experimental approaches, from using primary cells to studies in humans with neurological diseases.

An important part of the effort is mimicking disease in a test tube. To accomplish this, CNND scientists need, and often use, a primary white blood cell type known as monocytes. Since 1993, the American Red Cross has collected white blood cells for this research from donors through a procedure called leukophoresis. This procedure involves drawing blood from the donor, processing it through a continuous flow cell separator to separate the white and red blood cells, and then returning the red cells and plasma to the donor. Once the white blood cells reach the lab, technicians use a process called elutriation to separate the cells into monocyte and lymphocyte fractions.

The human monocytes and peripheral blood lymphocytes provide the means to study how an ordinary immune response, as it might occur after infection in many parts of the body, also effects dementia. The Center uses the elutriation system also as a core for investigators both within and outside of the University. Cells are used at UNMC, the University of Massachusetts, University of South Carolina, Columbia University and the Albany Medical Center.

Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action.

- William James
Pathology Faculty Present at Annual USCAP Meeting

Several faculty members of the Department of Pathology and Microbiology presented poster presentations and abstracts at the 2004 Annual U.S.-Canadian Anatomic Pathology Meeting. This year the meeting was held in Vancouver, British Columbia, March 6-12, 2004. Presentations included:

“Correlation of Cytogenetic Abnormalities in 43 Consecutive Cases of Renal Cell Carcinoma: A Prognostic Impact on Grade and Stage.” Neil Abrahams, M.D.

“Cytogenetic and Molecular Cytogenetic Findings in 43 Aneurysmal Bone Cysts: Aberrations of 17p Mapped to 17p13.2 by Fluorescence In Situ Hybridization. United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology.” Althof PA, Ohmori K, Zhou M, Bailey JM, Bridge RS, Nelson M, Neff JR, Bridge JA

“Aberrant Nuclear Immunoreactivity for TFEB is a Specific Marker of Renal Tumors Bearing the t(6;11)(p21;q12). Argani P, Hutchinson B, Bridge J, Reuter V, M Ladanyi.

“Recurrent Chromosomal Imbalances and Structurally Abnormal Breakpoints Within Complex Karyotypes of Malignant Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumor and Malignant Triton Tumor: A Cytogenetic and Molecular Cytogenetic Study.” Bruch LA Bridge RS, Neff JR, Naumann S, Althof P, Bridge JA.

“Correlation of Cytogenetic Abnormalities in 41 Consecutive Cases of Renal Cell Carcinoma: Prognostic Impact on Grade and Stage.” Abrahams NA, Balaji K, Nelson M, Bridge J.


“Prominent Inducible Nitric Oxide Synthase (iNOS) Expression in Small Intestinal Allograft Rejection.” Stan Radio, M.D.

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USCAP Director Presents at UNMC

Fred G. Silva, II, M.D., Executive Director of the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology, was the invited lecturer and honored guest at UNMC for a three day visit on April 14th, 15th and 16th. Hosted by Julia Bridge, M.D., Professor in Pathology and Microbiology, Dr. Silva presented a three hour lecture on the evening of the 14th, Grand Rounds on the 15th, and a session with staff and residents on the 16th.

Dr. Silva has earned a national and international reputation as a renal pathologist. He has published over 230 scientific articles and abstracts on various aspects of kidney disease. Dr. Silva has also received over 20 major teaching honors at the three institutions he has served – Columbia, University of Texas and the University of Oklahoma.

Dr. Silva’s lecture on April 14th, “500 Greatest Medical-Renal Hits,” was attended by UNMC faculty and staff, as well as pathologists from throughout the community. The following day, Dr. Silva was Grand Rounds Speaker, presenting on “American Medicine and Pathology.” His visit ended with the a finale of “Stump the Renal Pathologist” session in which Dr. Silva, accompanied by Dr. Neil Abrahams, Dr. Yuri Persidsky and Dr. Thomas Seemayer, of the Department of Pathology and Microbiology, reviewed difficult pathology cases with the department’s residents.
Grants Awarded:


Howard Gendelman, M.D., Molecular Mechanism of HIV-1 Mediated Encephalopathy. Awarded by: NIH through St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Center. 9/30/2003 – 8/31/2004. $238,140.


USCAP Presentations

(Continued from Page 5)

“Non-Invasive Detection of Carotid Artery Endothelial Dysfunction Due to Hypertriglyceridemia and Balloon Injury with High Frequency Real Time Low Mechanical Index Imaging of Retained Microbubbles.” Stan Radio, M.D.

“Human Identification Using Molecular Methods.” James Wisecarver, M.D., Ph.D.,

The Hematopathology Faculty – Dr. Dennis Weisenburger, Dr. John Chan, Dr. Timothy Greiner and Dr. Patricia Aoun, as well as Fellows, Dr. Kai Fu and Dr. Ken He Young, attended the annual USCAP meeting and collaborated with several other UNMC faculty, as well as national and international physicians on several meeting abstracts:


“Gene Expression Profiling by cDNA Microarray in Post-Transplant Lymphoproliferative Disorders.” TC Greiner, A Rosenwald, M Chiorazzi, L Smith, J Lynch, WC Chan, DD Weisenburger, WG Sanger, J Coad, T Gross, L Staudt.

“Follicular Large Cleaved Cell Lymphoma: An Unrecognized Morphologic Variant of Grade 3 Follicular Lymphoma.” CP Hans, BJ Dave, WG Sanger, P Aoun, TC Greiner, WC Chan, DL Pickering, JM Vose, JO Armitage, DD Weisenburger.


Dr. Sato Receives Award

The late Col. Barney Oldfield established the research fund at UNMC in 1999, in honor of his wife, who died that year after an 11 year battle with Alzheimer's disease. A Nebraska native, Col. Oldfield, who passed away in April, 2003, stated that once a cure was found, the money would be redirected to battle other disorders of old age. In addition to the $10,000 annual award, the principal of the endowment is increased by $10,000 each year.

Dr. Sato, who joined the Center for Neurovirology and Neurodegenerative Disorders in January, works in the laboratory of Dr. Tsuneya Ikezu, a past award recipient. Dr. Sato will use the stipend to help fund research which will focus on novel human specific protein in Alzheimer's disease.

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Two Pathologists Are Part of Multidisciplinary Team

Neil Abrahams, M.D., Assistant Professor and Sonny Johansson, M.D., Professor, in the Department of Pathology and Microbiology, are part of a unique team of multidisciplinary specialists at UNMC who have recently joined together to serve patients with urinary tract cancers, including kidney, bladder, prostate, penile, testicular and other rare pelvic and abdominal cancers.

The team of specialists will come together to form a Multidisciplinary Genitourinary Oncology Clinic (MGOC). The purpose of the clinic will be to provide patients with a consensus of opinion following discussion by all specialists involved, in one visit to the patient. Other members of the team are K.C. Balaji, Associate Professor of Urologic Surgery, Dr. Charles Enke, Professor & Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology, Dr. Ralph Hauke, Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Department of Internal Medicine and Chief of Oncology at the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Residency Match Results

The Department’s Residency Program had three open positions available for the 2004-2005 Academic Year and this year the program successfully matched with three Medical Graduates.

Allison Cushman-Vokoun, Craig Nerby and Heather Peck will join the Pathology and Microbiology Residency Program on July 1st.

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ASCP Awards Honor Goes to Medical Student Elizabeth Jaden

Congratulations go out to second year medical student Elizabeth Jaben for receiving the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) award for Academic Excellence and Achievement. The ASCP annually honors one second year student from each medical school in the United States and Canada who best fulfills the ASCP award criteria of general academic excellence and promise.

The department wishes Elizabeth continued success in medical school and hopes to see her pursue pathology as a career choice in a few years.
Doctoral Dissertation Defended

Eric Anderson, Ph.D., graduate student, successfully presented his doctoral defense on February 27th. His presentation was entitled:

“A Neuroelectrophysiologic Basis for Hippocampal Synaptic Dysfunction in a Murine Model of HIV-1 Encephalitis.”
Co-advisors are Dr. Huangui Xlong and Dr. Howard Gendelman.

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Congratulations To:

Dolores Amos-Bayer on the birth of her granddaughter, Megan Lyn, born December 25, 2003. Dolores’ son Jim and wife Kennetha, of Stapleton, New Jersey, are the proud parents.

Mike Klaebisch, from the LIS office, and his wife, Pam, who are the proud parents of a baby boy. Spencer Matthew was born on April 23rd, weighing at 6 lb, 8 oz., and was 19 ½ long.

Andrea Fellows, who graduates from the University of South Dakota, College of Business on May 8th. Andrea is the daughter of Pat Fellows, Ancillary Testing Coordinator for The Nebraska Medical Center.

Jennifer Kolar, daughter of John and Mary Kolar, who will graduate Summa Cum Laude in May from George Washington University with a dual degree in International Business and Finance. She has been hired as a financial analyst with the investment banking firm of Houlihan, Lokey, Howard & Zukin in their Virginia office. Jennifer’s mother, Mary, is a technologist in Special Hematology at The Nebraska Medical Center.

Sarah Pfaltzgraff, who was crowned the 2004 Tower Queen by the Northwest Missouri State University’s Blue Key Honor Fraternity The honor is based on leadership, service and contributions to Northwest. Sarah, the daughter of Lyn Pfaltzgraff, is graduating with a Senior Broadcasting and Public Relations Major.

Pathology/Microbiology Research Seminars

February 18, 2004 - Benjamin Swanson, Ph.D. Graduate Student (Advisor: Dr. Tony Hollingsworth) “Adhesion and signaling consequences of a ligand interacting with MUC1.”


March 24, 2004 - Jill Pecha, Ph.D. Graduate Student (Advisor: Dr. Hua Xiao) “TIP30 Deficiency Impairs Mouse mammmogenesis and promotes tumorigenesis.”

March 31, 2004 - Scott Koepsell, Ph.D. Graduate Student (Advisor Dr. Steven Hinrichs) “Structural and functional studies of primase: An essential replication enzyme.”

April 21, 2004 - Ganesh Suryanarayana, Ph.D. Graduate Student (Advisor: Dr. Tony Hollingsworth) “NMR-based structural studies on MUC1 tandem repeat glycopeptides.”

April 28, 2004 - Chunhui Yi, Ph.D. Graduate Student. (Dr. Tony Hollingsworth – Advisor) “Promotor analysis of microarray data to identify downstream targets of MUC1 signaling.”

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Department-Wide Picnic is Scheduled for July

The UNMC Pathology and Microbiology Department Picnic will be held on Saturday, July 10th, from 9:30 a.m. till dusk. This year, the picnic will be held at Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo, in the Sea Lion Picnic Area, and will be open to all Path/Micro employees, their spouses and children. The day of fun will include zoo and IMAX admission, as well as a ride on the train and carousel. The day will be filled with fun, food and surprises, so plan to attend. RSVPs will be requested. If you have not received your invitation, please contact Earline Titsworth in the Chair’s Office.